

Disruption

FROM PAGE 1

Its project launch celebration was held in Honolulu, Hawaii on January 16 and all except Bangladesh have started using it commercially.

Initially, the longevity of the cable was fixed at 20 years, which may be increased to 25 years by optimum maintenance.

There are immense benefits of this connection, which marks a global communications milestone, according to the industry insiders. Using it, the country will get an additional 1,500 Gigabits per second (Gbps) bandwidth.

Bangladesh now uses 180 Gbps bandwidth from its first submarine cable system, SEA-ME-WE-4, set up in 2006. Another 260 Gbps is imported from India.

Internet business entities say they are eagerly waiting to use the second submarine cable as it will hopefully lead to cut in bandwidth import that costs millions of dollar every month.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was supposed to inaugurate the Kuakata landing station through video conferencing from her official residence Gono Bhavan on July 31.

But on Tuesday, the inland link was down for 12 hours, forcing the authority to cancel the opening ceremony, said a top official of the telecom division.

Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL), the state-owned company which set up the inland line, also acknowledged the disruption.

"On Tuesday, some of the BTCL lines were disrupted or cut simultaneously in different places of the country," said Mir Mohammed Morshed, director, public relations and printing of BTCL.

But the company would not explain further.

BTCL officials claim their inland line is ready since March and it is "being used for different purposes" in telecommunication sector.

Sources say the process to establish the line began three years back. Recently, the company extended the project tenure up to September as it could not complete the work.

On March 2, during a visit to the

landing station, State Minister for Telecom Tarana Halim told journalists that commercial operations of the cable would begin in the first half of that month.

After that she held meetings with the officials concerned but foolproof connectivity between the landing station and Dhaka could not be ensured.

This correspondent called Tarana yesterday several times but she did not respond. Her public relations team also could not be reached.

However, a top ministry official called back and requesting anonymity said the prime minister's programme might have been cancelled because of ongoing floods and heavy rains.

Contacted, the cable's owner, Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited, which is also a public company, said they are fully prepared on their part and can launch the service if they get the inland link ready.

"We have planned to transmit 200 Gbps bandwidth initially and when it will be available, importing bandwidth from India will be automatically stopped," said Monwar Hossain, managing director of BSCCL.

BSCCL is planning to reduce the bandwidth price by 20 percent after the commercial launch of the second cable connection, he said, adding that end users will ultimately get internet at cheaper prices.

Imdadul Haque, general secretary of Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB), said definitely the quality of this connection will be better than India's and the whole industry is waiting for it.

"If we get services from the second cable at competitive prices, we will not use imported bandwidth."

To bear the expenses for the second submarine cable, BSCCL borrowed \$44 million from the Islamic Development Bank and its instalments of the repayment will begin from this October.

"After getting connected to the second cable, our earnings will rise much more and that will help us repay the loan," said another top official of the company.

Naming and Renaming Dhaka's Streets

M H HAIDER

CARTOON: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

We use names of Dhaka's streets and neighbourhoods every day, but often without giving a second thought on how they came about and what trivia they hold.

For example, you have surely heard of Urdu Road. Obviously, the name refers to the language, right? Wrong! In Turkish, 'urdu' means 'camp'. According to Azimushshan Haider's book, 'Dacca: History and Romance in Place Names' (first printed in 1967), "The place was the camp of Moghal (Mughal) soldiery. The name 'Urdu' here has nothing to do with Urdu as a language."

Here are a couple of easy ones. Armanitola is named after Armenians, and Farashganj, after the French. The Armenian community in Dhaka included several affluent merchants. Their church, called The Church of the Holy Resurrection (established in 1781), is still standing in the area. On the other hand, in 1740, the French were given permission open a 'ganj' or market, and hence Farashganj came to be.

There are names which today speak of the geographical features of those areas in the past. To illustrate, '-bagh' means 'garden'; we have Shahbagh, Lalbagh, etc. Meanwhile, Nilkhet reminds us about the connection of indigo with the place, and Motijheel refers to a canal/rivulet.

Other than flora and fauna, there are places named after monuments as well (e.g. Dhakeshwari Road).

Many 'mahallas' owe their name to the profession of their residents. The 'shankaries' (conch-shell artisans) are one of the oldest existing communities of our city; their locality is called Shankhari Bazaar. Tanti Bazaar, similarly, indicates that 'taantis' (weavers) had lived in

the mahalla.

On the other hand, the process of street renaming sometimes has interesting stories behind them, revealing the sentiments and politics of people. The case of renaming Tanti Bazaar may be a classic one. Before narrating the attempt of renaming Tanti Bazaar, it is first essential to understand the practice of naming streets in honour of individuals.

There are numerous instances of streets named after persons. Fuller Road, for example, pays tribute to Bampfylde Fuller, the first Lieutenant Governor of the province of East Bengal and Assam. Even if one was not politically/socially important, he would still be able to have a street named after him - by donating sums for public works. This practice was prevalent between 1910 and 1940. "In most cases the man offering 'donation' (usually just a few hundred rupees) on the precondition that a road to be named after him (or his nominee) had hardly any background of public service,"

Haider wrote.

A similar proposal was made by a person for Tanti Bazaar: he proposed to sponsor the electrification of the road if it was renamed after his father. However, the residents protested against the change, as the original name cherished the glory of the weaver class.

Haider in his book quoted the letter which was given to the Municipality in protest. It presented quite an interesting argument: "If this system be possible, rich men of the town and other place (would) ask the Commissioners to change the name (of) Dacca into other name according to their wish by giving handsome donation..."

However, in 1921, the authority carried forward with the change, even though we know the area as Tanti Bazaar till this date.

The names of streets and neighbourhoods tell tales of Dhaka's history, culture, commerce, people, and flora and fauna. So, the next time you hear a street name, find out the origin. Answers will give you a sneak peek to the past!

WATERLOGGING Ctg police too buy a boat

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chittagong

The office of Chittagong Superintendent of Police has got a boat for emergency movement, witnessing severe flooding of the compound during this monsoon with water going up to the waist and, in extreme cases, to the neck.

The worsening waterlogging problem in the port city has been forcing government offices to go for alternative means to continue doing day-to-day official activities.

Earlier, a tax office in Chittagong bought a boat to facilitate the movement of its staff to and from office when vehicles could not ply across the roads due to waterlogging.

The roads in and around the SP office that was temporarily shifted to the Halishahar Police Line in the city in March go under knee to waist-deep water during monsoon and high tide, sources in the SP office said.

On Tuesday, flood water inside the compound went up to the neck following a tidal surge recorded at 5.27 metre, the highest until now this year. The boat was collected that day from Sitakunda Police Station for the officials' emergency movement.

Apart from the temporary SP office, the police line also houses the district traffic unit, district Detective Branch, armoury, victim support centre, district Special branch and commandant office of range reserve force.

"We have been experiencing hassles for tidal water every day since the temporary transfer of the office to Halishahar," said Mohiuddin Mahmud Sohel, additional SP (district special branch). Tidal water coupled with heavy shower worsened the situation since Sunday.

"Even we could not move from one building to another inside the compound due to waterlogging," Mohiuddin added.

Rezaul Masud, additional SP (headquarters), said the police stations located in the coastal belt possessed boats for emergency movement.

As the duty vehicles could not enter the compound of the police line due to severe waterlogging, the boat was used to carry officials to and from the office, he added.



Police officials of the office of the Chittagong Superintendent of Police are now also using a boat for emergency movement. Heavy rains coupled with poor drainage have resulted in the streets being flooded. The photo was taken at the District Police Line in Halishahar on Tuesday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Too much rain

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Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority organised the event at its headquarters in Karwan Bazar to explain why the capital turned into a swamp on Wednesday.

That day, there was hardly any thoroughfare, lane or by-lane that was not submerged following incessant rains for hours. The rainwater could not run into the low-lying retention areas as they had already been filled after rains the previous days, he said.

The city, however, returned to normal as it did not rain yesterday.

Responding to a recent remark by Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon that Wasa was to blame for the inundation, Taqsem said, "It was a 'flat' statement and I don't agree with it."

"Wasa alone is not responsible for running the drainage system. If it was then why did the south city corporation take a Tk 500 crore storm drainage scheme and the north city corporation has been setting up storm drainage pipelines over the years?"

"Isn't the mayor's statement self-contradictory?" he asked.

WASA EXPLANATION ON CITY'S INUNDATION

The WASA MD said all their pumps at four stations were in operation to drain out rainwater on Wednesday but the city streets were flooded because of downpour for around six hours.

All the existing artificial storm drainage facilities, including 370km Wasa pipelines and over 200 km city corporation feeder drains, and the natural canals had already been filled with water following rains over the last few days.

As a result, such a huge volume of rainwater on Wednesday could not recede anywhere, causing the waterlogging, he said.

Taqsem claimed that they had cleaned the storm pipelines and canals and removed solid wastes from the drains.

The two city corporations are capable of collecting about 80 percent of 6,000 tonnes solid wastes the capital produces every day. The rest of the wastes go into the drains, he said.

"Also, there is hardly any water retention facility left in the city on its way to the run off to rivers," he said, adding, "Dhaka's Detailed Area Plan has not been followed accordingly and most of the low-lying wetlands and flood flow zones have been filled up."

No to partisan prosecution

FROM PAGE 1

The lack of an effective procedure to screen and appoint prosecutors sometimes creates embarrassing situations. In June 2007 for example, a lawyer accused of a murder was appointed public prosecutor in Naogaon district. He was appointed by the district magistrate with the law ministry's approval.

On July 5, 2015, Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha himself decried the existing system of appointing ruling party men as public prosecutors as well as the faulty investigation by police. He also spoke about their poor knowledge about criminal laws.

"There is shortcoming not only in investigation, but also in prosecution as the public prosecutors do not perform their duties properly," he said.

Against this backdrop, the government has moved to introduce the permanent prosecution system, which many countries, including India and the UK, already have.

Two former law ministers Moudud Ahmed and Shafique Ahmed, who had tried to introduce the system, welcomed the government decision.

It has been a long-standing demand for reforming the highly politicised prosecution system. But the demand remains unmet, thanks to successive governments' policy of appointing ruling party men in the posts.

Anisul's predecessors Moudud and Shafique during the past BNP and AL-

led governments' tenure had moved to change this in vain.

Moudud was critical of the political appointment. In 2005, he said inefficiency of the prosecution led to the quashing of some 70 percent cases.

Under his initiative, a two-day consultation on the introduction of the proposed government attorney service was held in May that year. But his move did not see the light for obvious reasons.

His successor Shafique had also tried, but failed to make any progress.

However, the last caretaker government-led by Fakhruddin Ahmed in 2008 had done the groundbreaking work for making a law through an ordinance to set up a permanent attorney department.

The ordinance had stipulated that an individual must have certain qualifications to get appointed as a public prosecutor.

The law ministry had also sent a proposal to the then establishment ministry for creating more than 3,000 posts for the attorney department.

Lawyers had welcomed the caretaker government's move.

But it made no further progress as the AL government that took office in January 2009 opted for retaining the system of appointing party men as prosecutors.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Moudud said, "I appreciate very much the decision to introduce a permanent

prosecution service though it is late."

He called on the government to implement the decision immediately. "If the prosecution service improves, the crime rate will come down."

When he was law minister during 2001-2006 BNP government tenure, he had moved to introduce the system. He said he even placed a draft law before the cabinet for its approval in 2004 or 2005.

"I could not introduce the attorney service. It was my failure," he added.

Shafique Ahmed, who was law minister of the past AL government from 2009-2013, said formation of a permanent prosecution service was a demand of the Asian Development Bank.

"I tried my best to bring reform in the current system," he said.

Once the new system is introduced, he said, it would help expedite the case disposal rate and reduce the huge case backlog.

If they are appointed permanently, they will try to dispose of the cases quickly as they will be solely responsible for it, Shafique added.

The former law minister also spoke about the poor remuneration for the public prosecutors.

Because of such poor pay, public prosecutors remain busy with private practice, he noted.

At the moment, public prosecutors and additional public prosecutors get Tk 500 a day and assistant public pros-

ecutors Tk 200 in metropolitan areas.

At district level, the amount is Tk 250 and 150 respectively, an additional public prosecutor in Dhaka told The Daily Star last night.

In addition to this daily pay, public prosecutors and additional public prosecutors each get Tk 3,000 a month in office expenses in metro areas and Tk 1,500 in districts, he added.

And although assistant public prosecutors can do private practice and can take both criminal and civil cases, prosecutors and additional prosecutors can do so only for civil cases, he said.

"It is not possible to carry out the duty properly with such nominal pay," he added.

At the conference, Noakhali DC yesterday raised the issue, saying the monthly allowance and honorarium for the public prosecutors was last fixed in 2003.

As they have been getting the same pay for the last 14 years, public prosecutors do not feel encouraged to represent the government in courts, he said.

Gaibandha DC recommended formulating a code of conduct for the public prosecutors and government pleaders.

About the poor pay, the law minister said the salaries of public prosecutors, government prosecutors, additional public prosecutors and addition government prosecutors would be hiked soon.

Editing

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to create so-called designer babies.

Results of the peer-reviewed study are expected to be published soon in a scientific journal, according to OHSU spokesman Eric Robinson.

The research, led by Shoukhrat Mitalipov, head of OHSU's Center for Embryonic Cell and Gene Therapy, involves a technology known as CRISPR that has opened up new frontiers in genetic medicine because of its ability to modify genes quickly and efficiently.

CRISPR works as a type of molecular scissors that can selectively trim away unwanted parts of the genome, and replace it with new stretches of DNA.

Scientists in China have published similar studies with mixed results.

In December 2015, scientists and ethicists at an international meeting held at the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in Washington said it would be "irresponsible" to use gene editing technology in human embryos for therapeutic purposes, such as to correct genetic diseases, until safety and efficacy issues are resolved.

But earlier this year, NAS and the National Academy of Medicine said scientific advances make gene editing in human reproductive cells "a realistic possibility that deserves serious consideration."